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ABSTRACT

This edited volume considers the contemporary position of 18 threatened languages. Two important questions are examined in every case: (a) what is the current demographic and functional status of a threatened language? and (b) what is the best way to understand its future prospects? The view presented in this volume is that there are ways to save a language and that consignment to death and oblivion is deeply flawed and biased. Fishman's 1991 theory of how to achieve "good health and stability" in a language is re-examined, as are the intervening and current criticisms of that theory, and recommendations for the theory's selective retention and improvement are formulated. In addition to introductory and concluding chapters, chapters are organized under four geographic headings: "The Americas"; "Europe"; "Africa and Asia"; and "The Pacific." Topics covered include reversing language shift among Navajos, Basques, Quebecois, Catalans, Otomi, Quechua, Frisians, and Australian Aboriginals. Also discussed is the status of Spanish among New York's Puerto Ricans. Scholarly references are found at the conclusion of each chapter. A detailed subject index is also included. (KFT)

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